THE ART EXHIBITION CATALOGUES OF THE
SIDNEY JANIS GALLERY, NEW YORK

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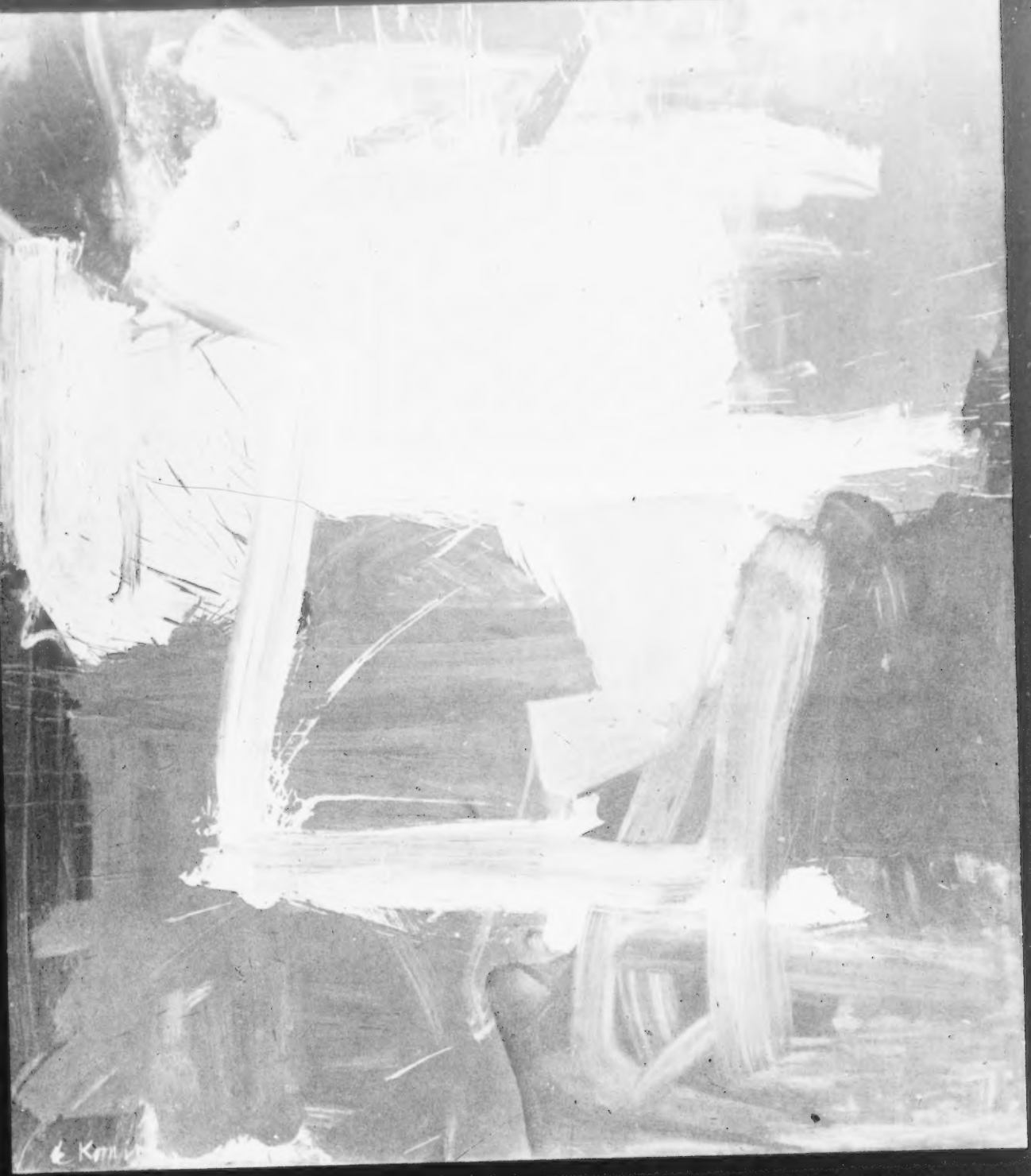
YORK



Untitled 1961 Oil 80 x 70" 29

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© 1962 Sidney Janis Gallery, New York

SINCE his last one-man show in this gallery in 1959, Willem de Kooning has traveled to Venice and Rome, to California; he has worked in New York and Long Island; he is designing and preparing to build a house in Easthampton.

The pictures in this exhibition are of six types, from five places, in two "periods," a continuation of the "abstract" pictures of 1955-61 and a possible beginning of a new Women series:

1. A group of small oils-on-paper, squares cut from larger studies, isolating certain combinations of shearing stroke, of colors, indications of direction, speed, elision, done in New York preliminary to, and with, the paintings in his 1959 one-man exhibition. They date 1957-59.

2. Drawings in black enamel, thickened and dimmed with pumice, on Fabriano paper (27½ by 39 inches), often painted on both sides of the sheet, the paper itself frequently torn apart and reassembled into rectangles made of two or more pieces; are few are folded. They were done in Rome in the autumn and winter of 1959, in a studio, on the via Margutta, lent to the artist by Afro.

(In Rome, there was a section of landscape with a boat in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*. Combining his drawings in changing positions, he said, "It's amazing how a sense of landscape seems to come.")

3. Crayon drawings with wide sweeps of color, often black, green, and brown, with large areas of white left open, mounted in overlapping series, done in Southampton, in the summer of 1959.

(He said, "The marvelous thing about Courbet is how he can paint a tree, and put it there —in front of you—without Style.")

4. Blue ink drawings on writing paper (sheets 9 by 11 inches), often torn apart and remounted and overlaid, sometimes put into groups of four, done in San Francisco, in the winter of 1960.

5. A series of oils-on-paper (22 by 28½ inches) painted in Springs (Easthampton), L. I., in the summer of 1961. In these, for the first time since 1955, the subject of Woman is restated systemmatically and without fragmentation of anatomy (i.e., the Woman is "all there").

(On the Island, he takes long bicycle rides, the wind-flattened seaside landscape wheeling gently in vistas: meadow, beach, ocean, horizon, the shoreline ridges, sky, the giant summer sun . . . "I always want to keep putting things in . . .")

6. Four large oils on canvas (80 by 70 inches), done in the artist's new studio on lower Broadway, New York, in 1960-62.

(Notice how the proportions 8 by 7, given a horizontal, suggest a perfect square, and how 70 inches, given a landscape sensation, exactly fits the arms-spread gesture of man.)

None of these six groups is shown complete. Other large oils date from the time-span of the exhibition (1959-62). The little oils-on-paper once numbered in the hundreds; de Kooning kept them in packs, like playing cards, and dealt them out in changing sequences. Most of them are now destroyed; indeed de Kooning's whole process of creation invokes destruction as much, if not much more, than the finished work. More drawings were done in Italy and in America than possibly could be hung.

The Women of 1951-55, which are landmarks in modern art, were painted in ways that destroyed any preliminary image; the hypothesis was torn apart; the final result was pictures that look abstract. Now the Women seem to crystallize within the abstract picture. Painting *Women*, he got abstractions; painting abstractions, he got *Women*.

De Kooning is the opposite of Picasso from a point-of-view of methods: the American can say, "I do not find, I seek."

This is his most "intimate" exhibition. The drawings are part of his search, work that goes into work. They reveal the enormous complica-

tion of means, the endless number of chances taken. A toss of the dice, even when repeated infinitely, will never abolish hazard, but because de Kooning risks so much on each toss, danger becomes a philosophical presence in the pictures. Nothing is accepted on faith or from instinct; there is no design. Step 1) do a drawing; Step 2) tear it in two! Combine it with another drawing, its back to front. Tear another drawing on top of it. Perhaps a form will come from which it will be possible to go on to other forms.

In this sense, de Kooning is a painter with an immense memory; he works with continuity; his method is a continuous smashing of all his continuities.

It has been said (slightly contemptuously, quite contemptibly) that de Kooning's "space" is Cubistic, or grown from Cubism. This, it seems to me, profoundly misunderstands both Cubist construction and de Kooning's innovating recreation of his own light, sense of place, space.

He does not build with planes, but rather discovers points from which indications will shoot across the canvas, like vectors, like electric arcs, like the surface of the East River when the rip tides pull the water in thick, fast, even, opposed directions. The painting is all there, in front of you, without any Style. The impasse of the Picture Plane is exploded; the paint, its surface, is absolutely present, palpable, breathing, but the ambiguities inherent to this new kind of structure with points of direction allows a learned dialectic of illusion to come back to painting. Areas of color are made simpler, larger, clearer in order to act in more complicated, violent, profound ways.

At a certain time, in the large paintings, a point of balance, a kind of anguished classicism, was reached. Perhaps at that precise moment of poise and reticence, the Women came back once more to disfigure any tenative equilibrium.

A complete artist completely of his time, de Kooning's work points to the future even as it explodes the smug banalities of chic avant-gardisticisms. In the scarred flesh of his paint, in the numb idol-ikon look of the new Women who have grown out of the moving flesh of pigment, is the pathos and irony of art as a criticism of our (his, its) life. These pictures are not substitutes for Morality, surrogates for Joy, they will not serve as space dividers, museum captions, or esthetic decor. They are not objects for contemplation, they are in themselves acts of passionate, intellectual, hypercritical, real thought.

In the lower left-hand corner of *A Tree Grows in Naples*, flesh, mineral-earth, grass-green, sea-blue rise straight up like a ladder, like the muscles around the spine; the colors open like cards on a poker-table to a flame of pink. This is a positive assertion. The shapes are kept out of any final position: the deathly effects of taste and nicety, of banal arrangement for a static image, are driven from the picture by keeping all its parts "off," out of the fit: there is a trembling of life. Unity beyond "composition" is achieved in the "philosophical synthesis" (or tension) established by this consistent anxiety of form. The picture struggles into inevitability; the look becomes total . . . what used to be called "masterpieces."

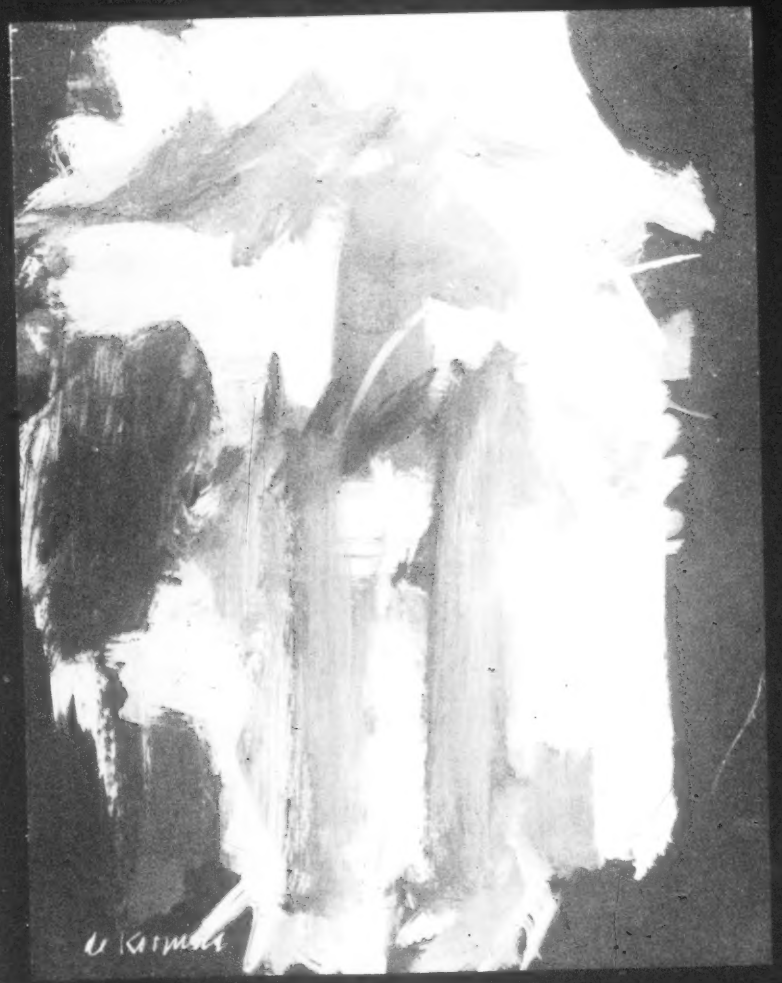
Thomas B. Hess

Untitled 1961 Oil 80 x 70" **30**

31 Woman I 1961 Oil & Collage 28½ x 22"

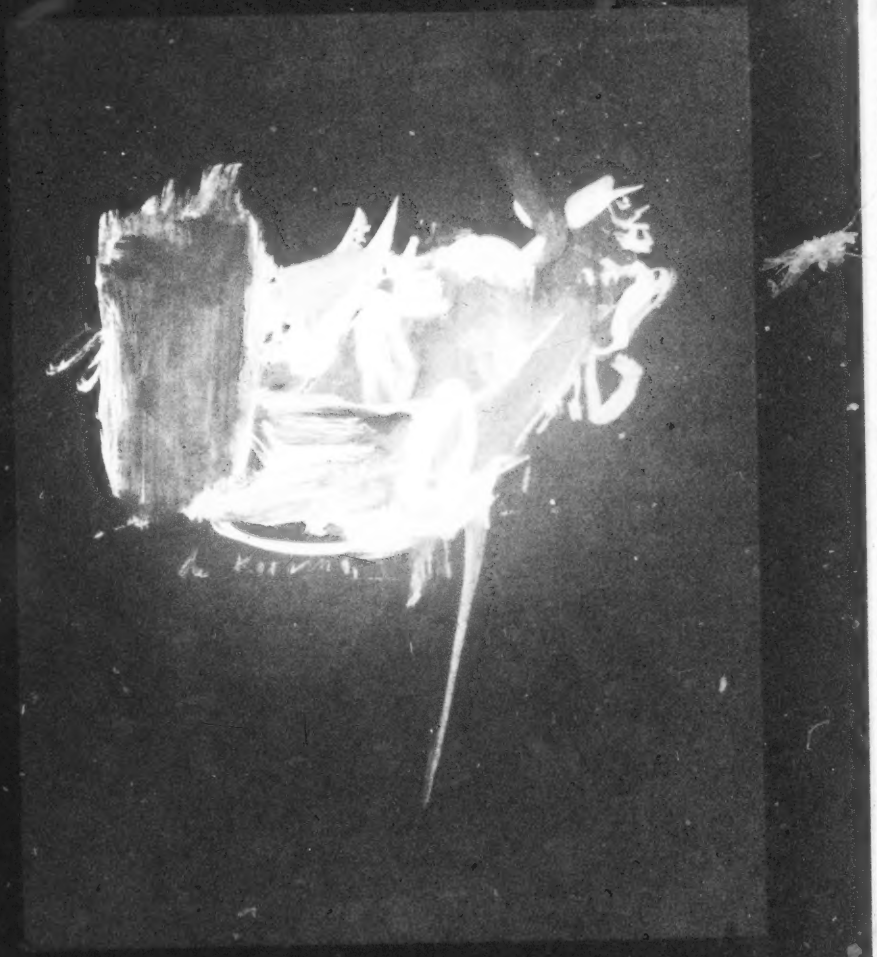
Woman II 1961 Oil 28½ x 22" **32**

40 Woman X 1961 Oil 28¾ x 22"



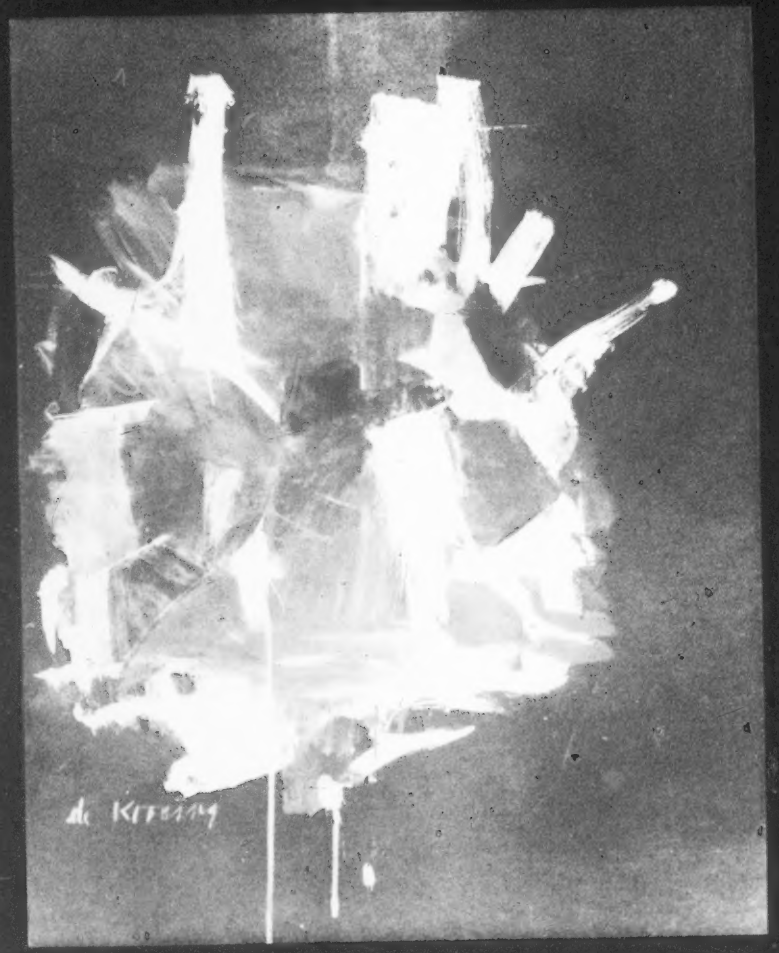
Woman III 1961 Oil 28½ x 21¾" **33**

36 Woman VI 1961 Oil 28½ x 22"

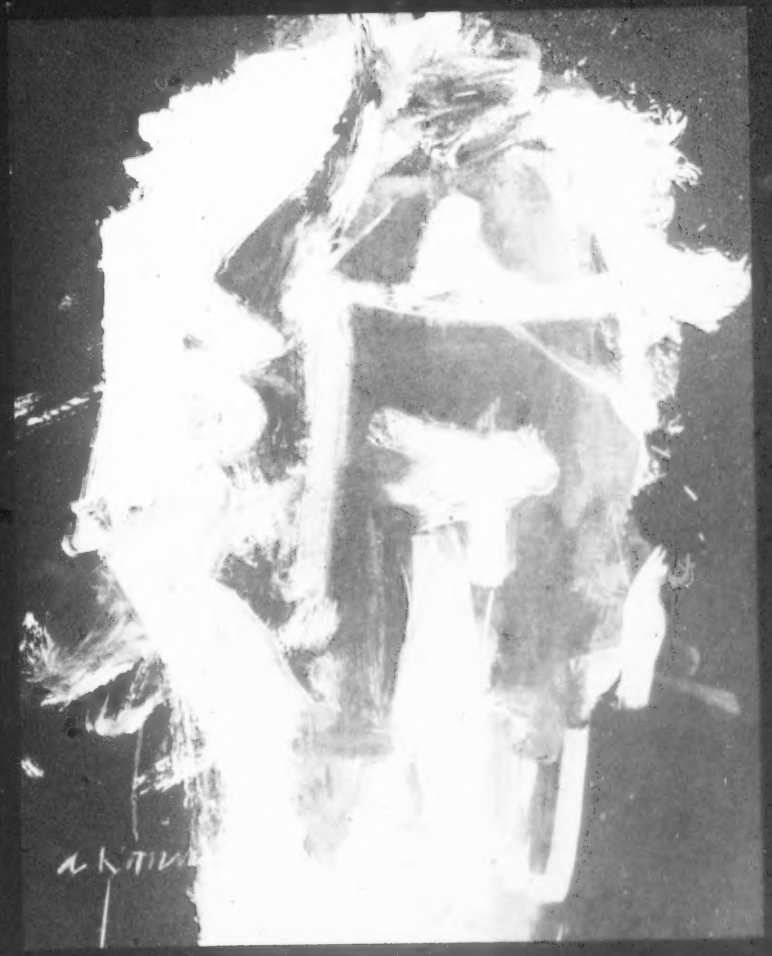


Woman IV 1961 Oil 28½ x 22¼" **34**

35 Woman V 1961 Oil 28½ x 21¾"



Woman VIII 1961 Oil 28½ x 22" **38**



41 Woman XI 1961 Oil 28¾ x 22"

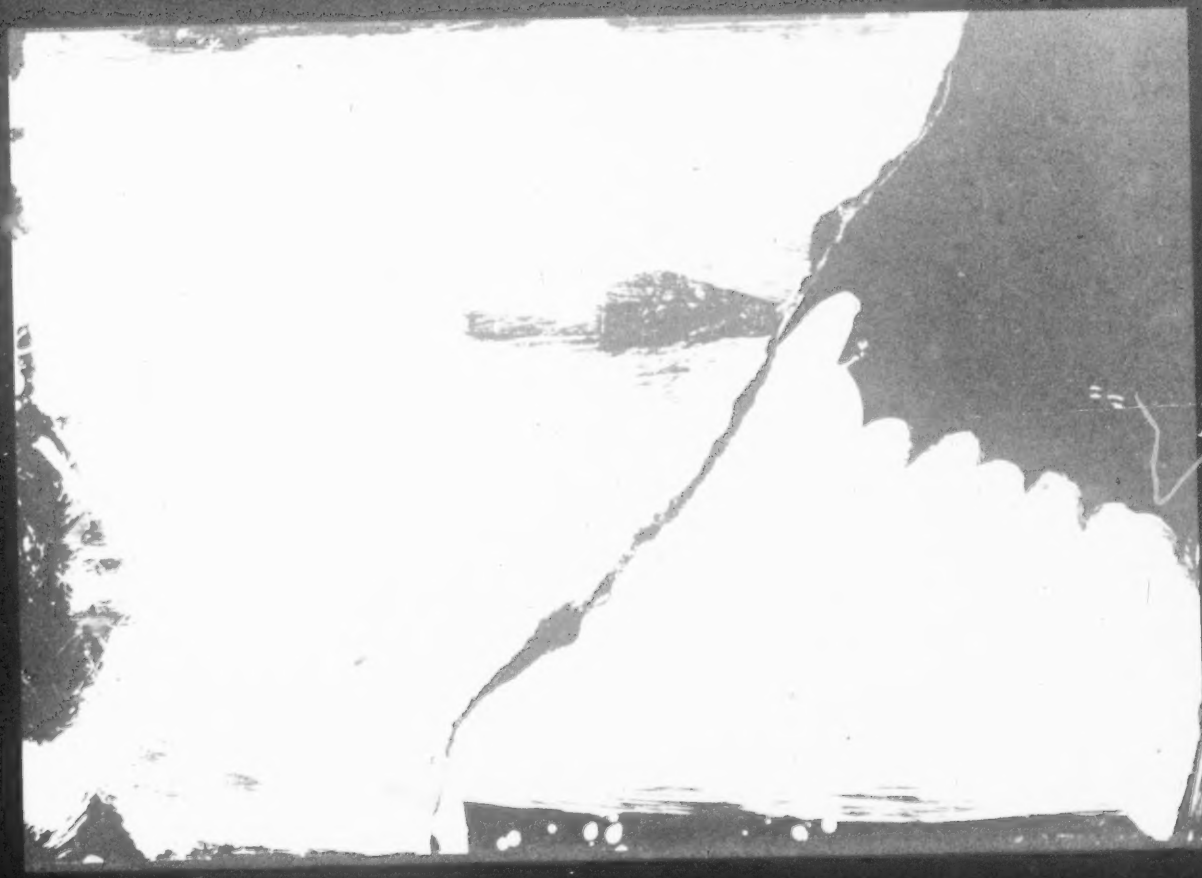
Woman IX 1961 Oil 28½ x 22" 39

37 Woman VII 1961 Oil 28½ x 22"

Black & White Rome S 1959 Oil 40 x 55¾" **15**

16 Black & White Rome T 1959 Oil 28 x 40"

10 Black & White Rome F 1959 Oil 28 x 40"



Black & White Rome B 1959 Oil 28 x 40" 7

28 **Untitled** 1961 Oil 80 x 70"

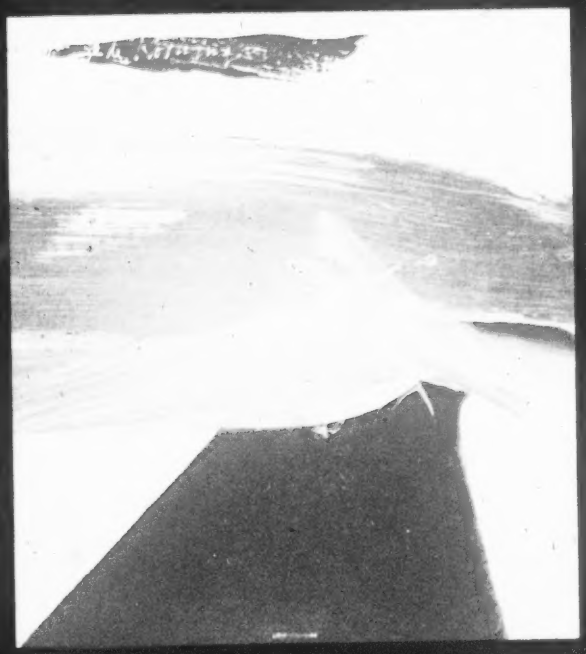
A Tree Grows in Naples 1960 Oil 80 x 70" **26**

3 Small Painting 3 1958 Oil 8 x 7"

2 Small Painting 2 1958 Oil 8 x 7"

1 Small Painting I 1958 Oil 8 x 7"

5 Small Painting 5 1958 Oil 8 x 7"



Small Painting 4 1958 Oil 8 x 7" **4**

9 Black & White Rome D 1959 Oil 40 x 28"

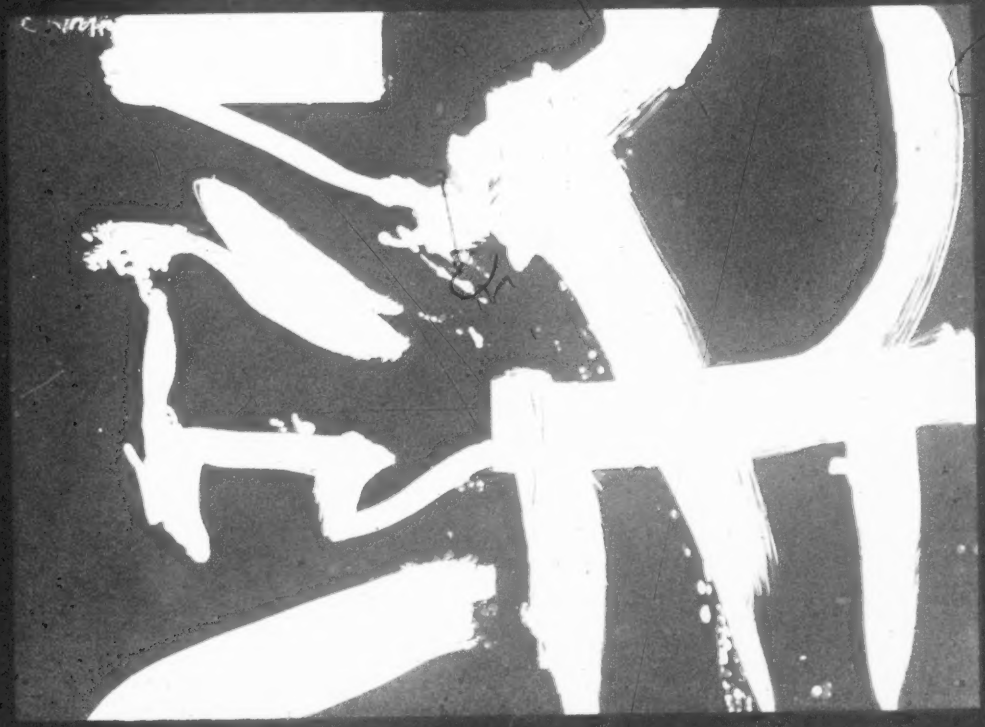
Black & White Rome P 1959 Oil 55¾ x 40" **12**

14 Black & White Rome R 1959 Oil 40 x 55¾"

17 Black & White Rome U 1959 Oil 26 x 28"

Black & White Rome V 1959 Oil 24 x 28" **18**

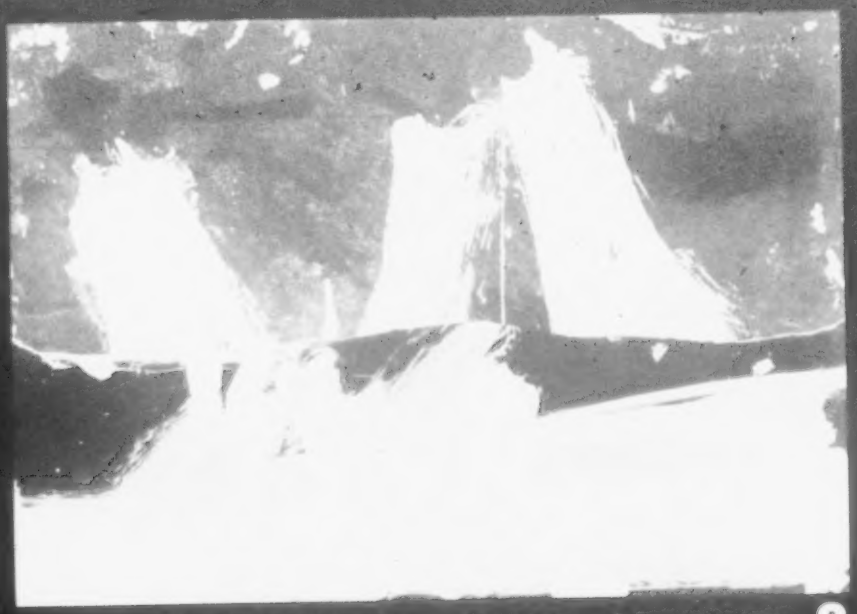
Black & White Rome Q 1959 Oil 40 x 55¾" **13**



23 Crayon & Collage 1960
11¾ x 9"

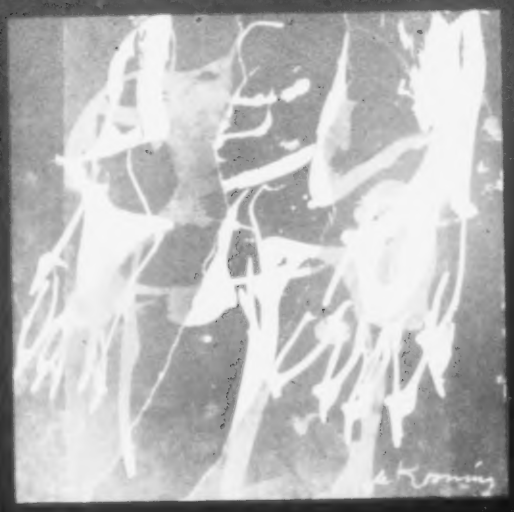
Crayon & Collage 1960
14 x 10" **24**

25 Crayon & Collage 1960 14 x 20"



Black & White Rome C 1959 Oil 28 x 40" 8

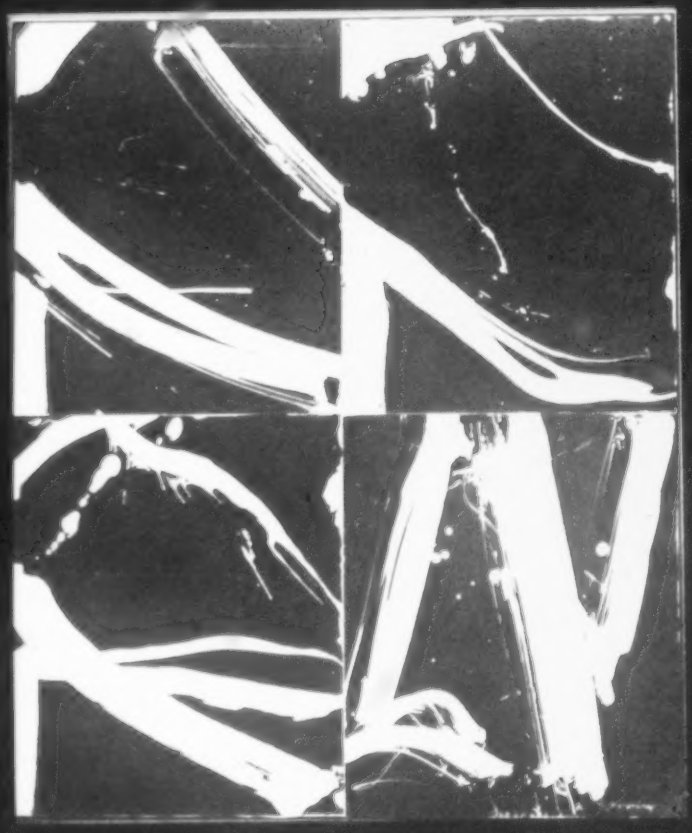
Black & White Rome A 1959
Oil 40 x 28" 6



19 **Blue & White** 1960 Blue Ink & Collage 11 x 11"

Blue & White 1960 Blue Ink 22 x 17½" **21**

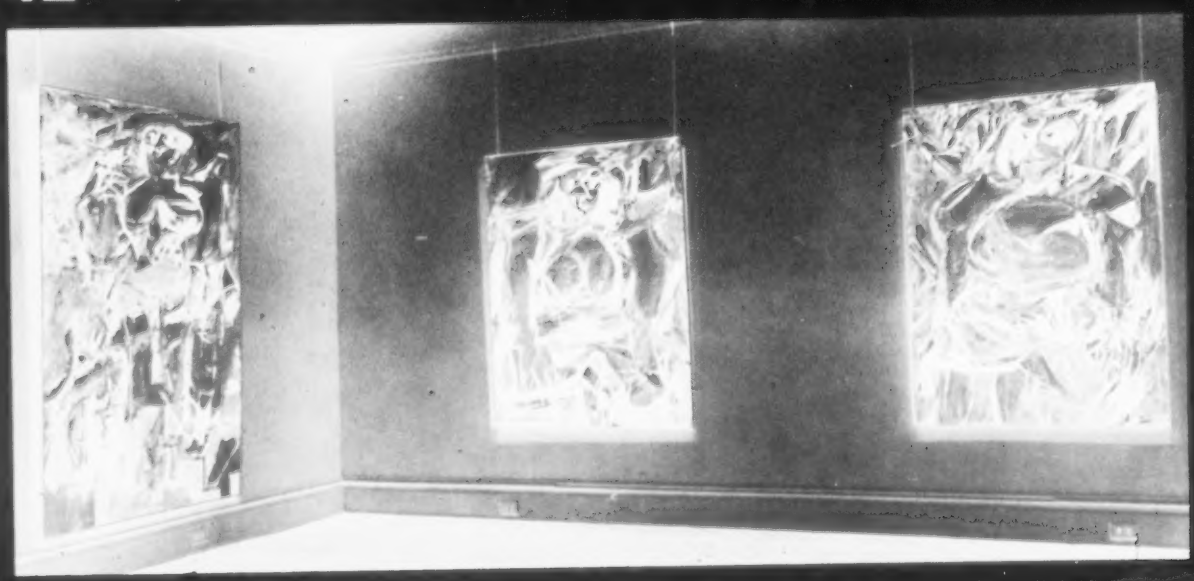
Black & White 1960 Black Ink 21½ x 28¼" **20**



Black & White 1950
Black Ink 33¾ x 27½" **22**

44 View, DEKOONING EXHIBITION May 1959

42 View, DEKOONING EXHIBITION March 1953



PAINTINGS

NEW YORK

1 Small Painting 1 1958 Oil 8 x 7"
2 Small Painting 2 1958 Oil 8 x 7"
3 Small Painting 3 1958 Oil 8 x 7"
4 Small Painting 4 1958 Oil 8 x 7"
5 Small Painting 5 1958 Oil 8 x 7"

ROME

6 Black & White Rome A 1959 Oil 40 x 28"
7 Black & White Rome B 1959 Oil 28 x 40"
8 Black & White Rome C 1959 Oil 28 x 40"
9 Black & White Rome D 1959 Oil 40 x 28"
10 Black & White Rome F 1959 Oil 28 x 40"
11 Black & White Rome J 1959 Oil 40 x 28"
12 Black & White Rome P 1959 Oil 55¾ x 40"
13 Black & White Rome Q 1959 Oil 40 x 55¾"
14 Black & White Rome R 1959 Oil 40 x 55¾"
15 Black & White Rome S 1959 Oil 40 x 55¾"
16 Black & White Rome T 1959 Oil 28 x 40"
17 Black & White Rome U 1959 Oil 26 x 28"
18 Black & White Rome V 1959 Oil 24 x 28"

SAN FRANCISCO

19 Blue & White 1960 Blue Ink & Collage 11 x 11"
20 Black & White 1960 Black Ink 21½ x 28¼"
21 Blue & White 1960 Blue Ink 22 x 17½"
22 Black & White 1960 Black Ink 33¾ x 27½"

EAST HAMPTON

23 Crayon & Collage 1960 11¾ x 9"

24 Crayon & Collage 1960 14 x 10"

25 Crayon & Collage 1960 14 x 20"

NEW YORK

26 A Tree Grows in Naples 1960 Oil 80 x 70"
Anonymous collection: New York (Color plate)

27 Door to the River 1960 Oil 80 x 70"
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (Color plate)
Gift of the Friends of the Whitney Museum. Not in Exhibition

28 Untitled 1961 Oil 80 x 70"
Collection: Mr. I. J. Aberbach, New York (Color plate)

29 Untitled 1961 Oil 80 x 70"
Anonymous collection: Los Angeles, California (Color plate)
Not in exhibition

30 Untitled 1961 Oil 80 x 70"
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Vadim Phillippe Kondratief,
Los Angeles, California

EAST HAMPTON

31 Woman I 1961 Oil & Collage 28½ x 22"

32 Woman II 1961 Oil 28½ x 22"

33 Woman III 1961 Oil 28½ x 21¾"

34 Woman IV 1961 Oil 28½ x 22¼"

35 Woman V 1961 Oil 28½ x 21¾"

36 Woman VI 1961 Oil 28½ x 22"

37 Woman VII 1961 Oil 28½ x 22"

38 Woman VIII 1961 Oil 28½ x 22"

39 Woman IX 1961 Oil 28½ x 22"

40 Woman X 1961 Oil 28¾ x 22"

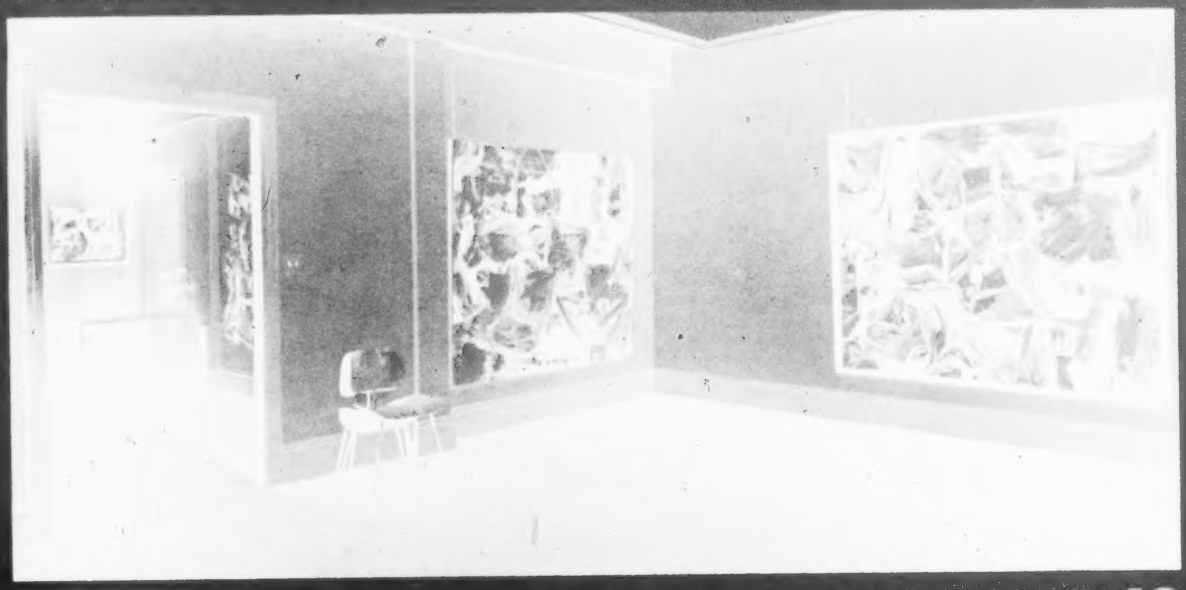
41 Woman XI 1961 Oil 28¾ x 22"

42 View, DEKOONING EXHIBITION March 1953

43 View, DEKOONING EXHIBITION April 1956

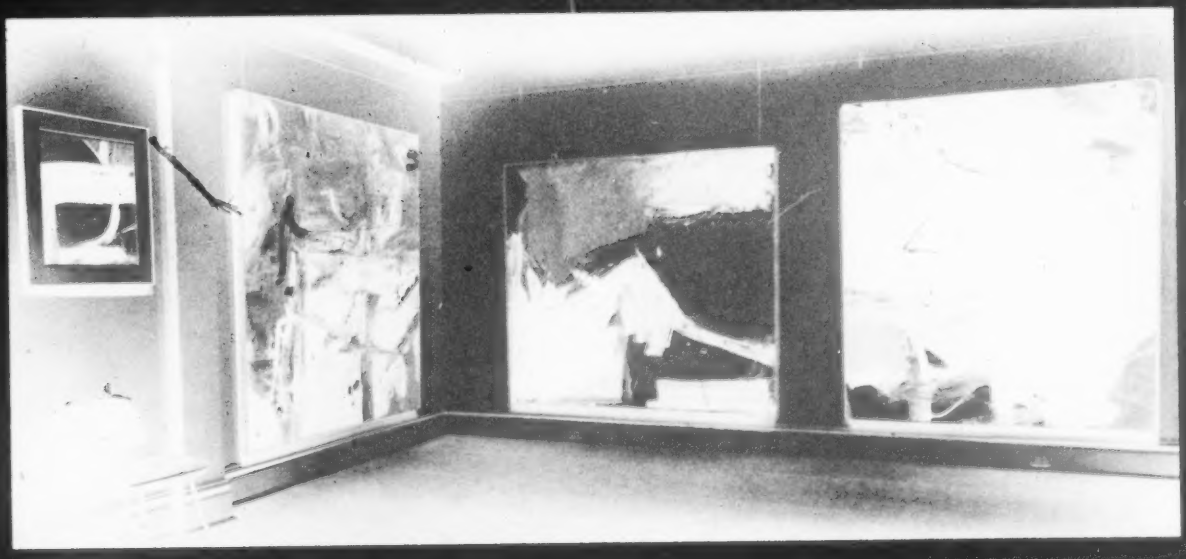
44 View, DEKOONING EXHIBITION May 1959

45 View, DEKOONING EXHIBITION May 1959



View, DEKOONING EXHIBITION April 1956 **43**

View, DEKOONING EXHIBITION May 1959 **45**



27 Door to the River 1960 Oil 80 x 70"

RECENT
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WILLEM deKOONING
OPENING MONDAY MARCH 5 FROM
TO MARCH 31 1962
AT THE SIDNEY JANIS GALLE
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NEW YORK